

The chicanos and the spanglish essay

[Sociology](#), [Immigration](#)



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Over the years, there has been a massive inflow of the Mexican nationals into the United States of America. This is made easy by the fact that Mexico borders the US to its immediate south. Some of the immigrants entered the US legally, but a portion moves across the borders into the US without any valid documents and still manage to establish settlements as they process the immigration documents. These immigrants, along with Mexican Americans are historically known to occupy a very place in the story of American immigration.

The main reason for migration into the United States was and still remains the need for fresher and greener pastures in terms of better paying jobs in the American industries and farms. Mexico is generally known to be a country that struggles when it comes to creation of jobs for its populace. So people move to the US for studies and they end up spending the rest of their lives working on the American soil. They invite their families to join them there and in no time, there is a big Mexican family.

The earliest arrivals came as cowboys. They worked on the ranches on the southwest of the United States. Others came to trade from the Spanish speaking Caribbean countries and decided to settle and bring up families in

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the United States of America. These families were assimilated into the American ways, but were keen to retain their culture. They maintain a lot of aspects of their culture such the attire e. g. the cowboy hat which is today associated with horse-riding. This is because the cowboys wore the hat when they rode the horse to move around the ranches. This just tells how much the culture of the Spanish speaking Mexican immigrants has impacted the American culture (Metcalf, Allan A, P. 56).

They are known by different names, hail from differentiated origins and followed different paths as they entered the United States. The Mexican immigrants and the Mexican Americans form a fairly big proportion of the total immigrants occupying the United States. They are among the oldest group of immigrants and more still enter the US today. Some had even inhabited the US before the state itself had existed, occupying the southern and the western regions of the American continent. Many more came in the 20th century, and they continue to arrive today.

They have a rich and complex heritage that sets them apart from many other immigrant groups in the United States. They have the influences of Spain, Mexico and the indigenous cultures. They also had their history shaped by wars and depressions. Today, the Mexican immigrants comprise the largest proportion of the American population and influence many other social and cultural groups. They shape the United States in a number of ways, including politics, language, and daily living aspects such as food. They define the American identity and influence the American culture in so many ways.

As of 2008, the population of the Mexican immigrants and the Mexican

Americans was estimated at 11.4 million, and this accounts for over 30% of the total American immigrant population. Over half of the Mexicans reside in the US illegally, but they make a point of legalizing their stay in the US while they stay there.

The Chicanos

The term 'Chicano' is used to refer to Mexicans who have grown up in the United States. It may also be used to denote the Hispanic population in the US. This group of people speaks a special kind of language referred to as Spanglish. It is a Latin-Germanic American language that is formed by blending Spanish and English (Ardilla, Alfredo, 60-63). It is an amalgam that contains parts of the two languages.

The Spanish immigrants don't speak the normal American English. They have had interactions and have married the English language and the Spanish language. Spanglish does not have a single unified dialect and lacks uniformity. It varies from region to region. The kind of Spanglish spoken by Mexican immigrants living in different parts of the United States such as New York, Texas, Miami, and California may differ. Even with the lack of uniformity, it is so popular in parts of the United States where Spanish speaking people live, most notably the Hispanic community.

It is not a pidgin language, but in the foreseeable future it could become one. It is totally an informal language, without any set hard-and-fast rules that guide its use. Linguists, however, argue that Spanglish can be given so many labels. They say it can be pidgin, due to the fact that it borrows so heavily from the English language. They say it is not an actual language due to the fact that it is based on the simplified grammar and syntax. The borrowing stems

from the need to have shared meaning for words as they are used among the Spanish speaking communities across the US. Spanish communities may have different definitions of the same words.

Some consider Spanglish to be dialect or creole of the Spanish language. It has developed to become a native language of second generation Hispanics who are often exposed to Spanglish when they are still so young and when they use the dialect, which is majorly understood by those speaking only the Spanish language. It may also be considered as an inter-language representing the border between the United States and Mexico.

Spanglish patterns

Spanglish has features which come out so strongly, code switching and borrowing. The words borrowed from English are usually adapted to the Spanish phonology. Code mixing and code switching will always be used by bilinguals. In code switching, a person starts a sentence in one language and at some point before he/she finishes his speech, they switch to another language. Usually, it will occur at the start of a sentence or when one begins a new sentence.

In code mixing, the change of language occurs at any given point in a sentence, not necessarily at the start or end of a sentence or topic. Code switching often happens when one is speaking Spanish and not English, supposedly because the native Spanish speakers are assumed to understand English more than the native English speakers understand Spanish. Code switching whose end product is Spanglish would be more embraced by native Spanish speakers more than any other kind of code switching.

Types of code switching

Spanish loanwords in American English

American English, like any other language in the world, has grown and expanded over the years, through the assimilation of words from other languages. It has borrowed heavily from the Spanish language and this is owed to the existence of Mexican immigrants majorly. The immigrants from Mexico have interacted with the Native American people, and some of their words have been incorporated in spoken and written American English dialect (Metcalf, Allan A, 53-55).

Today, the American English borrows heavily from other languages, mainly the Spanish language than before. Before, the reverse used to be true, with many other languages borrowing more from the English language. Most of the Spanish words have found their way into the English dialect from three notable sources. Spanish and Mexican cowboys who were working in the southwest regions of the United States were the biggest influence. Another source of Spanish words in English was the trade between the US and the Caribbean states, which are Spanish speakers. A third source is thought to be the names of foodstuffs, especially those that do not have English equivalents. This owes to the fact that intermingling cultural practices result in expansion of diets. The vocabulary has also expanded.

Some of the Spanish words lose their original meaning the moment they are incorporated into the English language. The adopted meaning is often a narrower one compared to what they are taken to mean originally in the Spanish language. I have generated a list of some of the Spanish loanwords that are widely used today as part of the written and spoken American

English vocabulary. Some of them had earlier been adopted into the Spanish language from elsewhere before they eventually found their way into the American English.

As you will see in the list, most of them have retained the pronunciation and even spelling of Spanish. The list below does not contain all the words, only some:

- Banana (is an African word which is thought to have entered the English vocabulary via Spanish). 2. Bizarre (this is said to come from the Spanish word bizarro). 3. Booby (from the Spanish word bobo which means selfish or silly) 4. Bronco (in Spanish it means wild or rough) 5. Bandoleer (is a type of belt from the Spanish word bandolera) 6. Armadillo (means the little armed one in Spanish). 7. Caldera (is a geological term) 8. Canary (is an old Spanish word canario which entered the English language through the French word canarie) 9. Cargo (is from the Spanish word cargar which means to load) 10. Canyon (is from Spanish canon) 11. Chile relleno (is a Spanish food) 12. Chocolate (is from the indigenous Mexican language word xocolatl) 13. Comrade (is from the word camarada which means roommate) 14. El Niño (is a weather pattern which means ‘ the child’ due to the fact that it appears around the Christmas time), 15. Embargo (is from the word embargar which means to bar) 16. Fiesta (it can mean a party in Spanish, or a feast or a celebration) 17. Guerilla (in Spanish, this refers to a fighting group, and a fighter is known as a guerillero) 18. Hacienda (the initial ‘ h’ is silent in Spanish) 19. Hurricane (it is from the word huracan which is an indigenous Caribbean word) 20. Jaguar (this is from Spanish and Portuguese and originally it was yaguar) 21. Amorous (is derived from the Spanish word ‘

amor' which means love)

These and many more words have been used in the as part of the AmericanEnglish language. Much of the American slang is a derived from the Spanish words. Children born today are brought up speaking the American language that contains so much Spanish. They tend not to know much of the original American spoken and written English.

As a result, the language spoken by a larger American youth population contains aspects of the borrowed English words. These Spanish words have so become part of the English language that their meanings can be looked up in the English dictionaries. Many youths identify with lots of Spanish words, and they consider most of them appropriate for use when one is to appear romantic. People like to hear them spoken in romantic scenes.

The Mexican movies are also thought to have influenced the American acting in many ways, given they started much earlier ahead of the American Hollywood movie acts. Soap operas owe their origin to the Spanish world. A lot of interesting romantic movies in Hollywood borrow heavily from the Mexican soaps. Spanglish tends to be used now more than ever to give the appeal.

In conclusion, we can say that much as other languages borrow from the English language, the latter has also got additions from the Spanish language and other languages and made the words so acquired look like its own. The Mexican immigrants and the Mexican Americans are the ones given the credit for the Spanish words assimilated into the mainstream English language in America. Spanglish being a product of marrying the English language to Spanish is a clear show that no language in the world is a stand-

alone language. Though not formal, it is widely used by the wider Hispanic population across the United States.

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